



#### NEWS RELEASE

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## NEBRASKA VR OBSERVES OCTOBER AS NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

Nebraska VR announced today its participation in National Disability Employment Awareness Month, an annual awareness campaign that takes place each October.

The purpose of National Disability Employment Awareness Month is to educate the public about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities.

"Nebraska VR is proud to be a part of this year's National Disability Employment Awareness Month," said Nebraska VR Director Mark Schultz. "We want to spread the important message that a strong workforce is one inclusive of the skills and talents of all individuals, including individuals with disabilities."

Nebraska VR helps people with disabilities, prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment while helping businesses recruit, train, and retain employees with disabilities. Reflecting this year's theme, throughout the month, Nebraska VR will be engaging in a variety of activities to educate Nebraskans on disability employment issues and the role they play in fostering a disability-friendly work culture. These efforts include a professional clothing drive, television and radio interviews, information booths and several community events across the state.

"We all have a role to play in — and benefit to gain from — increasing opportunities for meaningful employment for people with disabilities. This year's theme encapsulates this in three powerful words. It conveys that advancing disability employment is about much more than just hiring. It's about creating a continuum of inclusion. And the first step on this continuum is expectation," said Kathy Martinez, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy, when announcing this year's National Disability Employment Awareness Month theme, which is "Expect. Employ. Empower."

The history of National Disability Employment Awareness Month traces back to 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962, the word "physically" was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Employers and employees in all industries can learn more about how to participate in National Disability Employment Awareness Month and ways they can promote its messages — during October and throughout the year — by visiting Nebraska VR's website <http://www.vr.nebraska.gov/> or the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, website at [www.dol.gov/odep/](http://www.dol.gov/odep/).